

**Parks Advisory Committee**  
**March 25, 2009**  
**6:30 PM**

**Minutes**

**Call to order:** Mr. Rick Deeds called the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

**Mayor's Opening Comments:**

Mayor Ebert thanked everyone for their interest and help in being on this committee.

**Committee Organizer's Comments:**

Mr. Deeds welcomed everyone and asked that everyone state their name before they speak (to aide the transcriptionist).

**Introductions:**

**Members of the Committee include:**

Leah Turner	Rob Peters	Jeff Card	Amanda Parker
Stacy Boumis	Max Luehrs	Heather Bolin	Christina Byrd
Steve Donahue	James Baltzer	Gary Bumpus	

Kelly Abbott was absent.

Also in attendance was:

Rick Deeds, Victor Paini, Dr. John Bender and Marilyn Rush-Ekelberry (council members); Nanisa Osborn (Finance Director), Mayor Ebert, Matt Peoples (Dir of Public Works); and Bob Toledo and Joe Dihrkop (Joint Recreation District) - Bobbie Mershon (council) came in at 7:02pm

**Meeting Purpose & Goals:**

Mayor Ebert stated that the purpose of the committee is to get information about Parks and Recreation use and development in the Village of Canal Winchester for the future years. A Parks and Rec. Master Plan was drawn up and adopted in 1986. We are to revisit that plan and see if there is any need for upgrades and changes. In February 2011, the contract with the Canal Winchester School district that formed the Canal Winchester Joint Recreation Department will expire. We hope to have another long term contract in place soon.

Mr. Paini noted that the Mayor was at conference last year and saw Mr. Collins presentation and had him come and speak at the Committee of the Whole. Since that time, Mr. Paini, Dr. Bender and others have been trying to educate themselves on Rec. Mr. Collins will present an interesting perspective to the Recreation program and that's the business side; the positive financial impact that a great rec. program can have on a community. The Parks Advisory Committee should keep this in mind as they go through their discussions and this process.

### **Presentation by Tony Collins, Director of Parks & Recreation for City of Gahanna**

Mr. Collins, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Gahanna, is an advocate for the legislative side of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.

Mr. Collins' focus is on quality of life issues within the small town areas. Businesses and residents look to come to areas with amenities, schools, locations and quality of life. Parks and recreation is not a nicety, it's a necessity. It will attract residents and make them proud to live here and okay with paying taxes.

Is it an expense or an investment? It should be looked at as an investment. Obesity and activity has been engineered out of our lives. The rate of obesity has doubled among adults and tripled among teens. This inactivity has a great impact on our healthcare system.

A 2001 survey of 50 senior executives of Fortune 500 companies said that Quality of Life issues (parks and rec.) are the second most important thing that they look for when choosing a place to set up their businesses.

Quality of life also has a significant impact on property values. Mr. Collins presented several slides with examples of this increased valuation.

We know that money is tighter, road projects are costing more and resources are tighter. However, the benefits of park space, dog parks, skate parks, etc are so important. Start a Master Plan. It gives direction to staff, administration, engineering, development, community leaders and set us up for the next 5-10 years. Find out who our residents want us to be and what they want us to do. Find out their priorities and what they are willing to pay. Take inspiration from other areas. Look at their policies and practices and see how they could help your area. Look for innovative and unique ideas that will work within your community.

Gahanna found out that 97% people thought Parks and Rec. made the town what it was. 81% people thought bike trails and connectivity were the most important features. The next closest was 68%. That is a huge margin! They also found that 56% of people surveyed were willing to support a large tax to support these changes.

Gahanna took a long look at their pricing structures. For example, when a park is developed, it benefits every person in the community. It is free for all to use and it raises the property value of all the residents. However, swim lessons at the Municipal pool only benefit the person taking the lesson. Therefore, the Village shouldn't be paying for those lessons. That structure is based on a percentage and includes all activities and development, all the way down to athletic fields. Your master plan can help you define what the right price structure is for your community.

The planning process can be helped along by several resources. The Ohio Parks and Recreation Assoc has a website with great tools; [www.opraonline.org](http://www.opraonline.org) . The National Parks and Recreation Association, [www.npra.org](http://www.npra.org) , also has a lot of resources on it's website.

Discussion ensued regarding sustainable programs and Joint Recreation Districts.

### **Other Business:**

Some ideas for agenda items at future meetings; Green-space Inventory; Rec. funding info from previous years; Safe Routes to School program; various roles of the district, Village and schools.

Next Meeting will be Wednesday, April 22, 2009 at 6:30 PM

Mr. Paini moved to adjourn this meeting of the Parks Advisory Committee and was seconded by Mrs. Turner.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.**